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ABSTRACT

Many of the difficulties in educational reform arise because of deep ideological problems concerning education, problems that generally have their roots in liberal democratic theory. This book explores the varied and conflicting themes in public education. Chapters 1 and 2 discusses liberal democratic theory that permits a plurality of perspectives about education, and the conflicts among them originating from the conflicts in liberal democracy over the role and scope of state power and the relationship of the individual to the community. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 offer a thematic analysis of education policy by examining three major viewpoints regarding public education. One emphasizes common moral or cultural education, and a second emphasizes achievement and human capital. A third theme, "clientelism," views the school as an organization that responds to the needs of its clients, students and their families. Conceptual and institutional problems related to these themes, including contradictions among them, are explored. The final chapter suggests some areas for future reform efforts. Four figures illustrate the discussion, and each chapter contains notes. (SLD)

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